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CHINA FUMES AS PELOSI LANDS IN TAIPEI

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Tuesday visited Taiwan, the highest elected US official to travel to the island nation, which China claims as its own territory, in more than 25 years. Pelosi ignored China's repeated warnings, including a veiled threat of military action, against her trip. She was on a tour of Asia that included visits to Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan. Her stop in Taiwan was not announced but was widely anticipated.

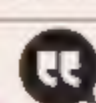
ITINERARY

Pelosi is scheduled to meet Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Wednesday, according to reports. She may also meet a group of activists campaigning against China's human rights record.



DON'T PLAY WITH FIRE, BEIJING WARNS

China claims Washington had assured Beijing that it would not dramatically change its policy towards Taiwan but that promise is now broken. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the US' betrayal is bankrupting its national credibility. Wang Yi said US politicians who play with fire on the Taiwan issue will "come to no good end".



Our delegation's visit to Taiwan honours America's unwavering commitment to supporting Taiwan's vibrant democracy — Nancy Pelosi

China's military said it was on "high alert" and would "launch a series of targeted military actions in response" to the visit. Taiwan's defence ministry said 21 Chinese military planes flew into its air defence identification zone (ADIZ) on Tuesday. ADIZ includes a far greater area that overlaps with part of China's own air defence zone.

The US also deployed four of its warships, including aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, in waters east of Taiwan in what the US Navy dubbed "routine deployments".

VISIT ENTIRELY HER DECISION, LINKEN

The White House said the US has no interest in deepening tensions with China and that it won't engage in saber rattling. "Congress is an independent, coequal branch of government. The decision is entirely the speaker's," said Secretary of State Antony Blinken. **P12**

QAEDA BOSS KILLED IN U.S. DRONE STRIKE IN AF; SPECULATION ON PAK ROLE; AQIS EXPECTED TO WEAKEN

Blast-less missile kills Zawahiri



Has no warhead to minimise casualty
Seeker with lasers
Six deadly blades. They open just before the missile homes in on the target
Remotely controlled drone fires the Hellfire missile
Kinetic energy from the speeding multi-bladed weapon makes it slice through whatever it hits, minimises collateral damage



Ayman al-Zawahiri

TRACKED FOR MONTHS BEFORE TAKING HIM OUT

Early this year, US officials identified Zawahiri's wife, daughter and her children had relocated to a safe house in Kabul.
Zawahiri subsequently relocated to the same house. In early April, Joe Biden got his first briefing.
Zawahiri was definitively identified while he was on the balcony of the house on multiple occasions.
On July 25, Biden met key Cabinet members to evaluate the fallout. He, then, authorised "a precise tailored air strike" to minimise civilian casualties.
The strike was finally carried out at 7:18 AM IST on July 30 by a drone firing a couple of Hellfire missiles.



Now, justice has been delivered and this terrorist leader is no more... No matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to our people, the US will find you and take you out
Joe Biden, US President

INSIDE HIS BALCONY VISIT PROVED FATAL | P12

CHANDAN NANDY @ New Delhi

AL-QAEDA head Ayman al-Zawahiri, one of the key conspirators in the 9/11 attacks, was killed in a CIA drone strike on the balcony of his Kabul safe house, US President Joe Biden announced on Tuesday. It is being seen as the biggest blow to the global terror network ever since Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan in 2011.

Zawahiri's elimination will considerably weaken the Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), which operates on a "low scale" in India with presence also in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, security officials said.

It also triggered speculation on whether the Pakistani regime sold him out to the US for crucial IMF aid — and to get off the grey list of terror financing — to save its crumbling economy, or was it the Taliban that gave the tip-off.

AQIS, whose influence is not as strong as Al Qaeda, is led by Asim Umar, an Indian who has been at its helm since September 2014 when it was reportedly founded by Zawahiri. Umar, who underwent training in radical Islamist theology in Kara-

chi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hails from Sambhal in UP.

While Indian intelligence — and whatever little presence it has in Afghanistan — had no clue of the July 31 drone strike on Zawahiri, a quick, preliminary assessment by senior officials led them to conclude that "sufficient care needs to be taken within India so that hot-heads here do not take to any form of violent means anywhere in India".

This, sources said, would mean wider and deeper surveillance of not only fundamentalist elements across India in general but also those still active in Kashmir.

Sources said that their concern stems from Zawahiri's April 2022 video message that praised a Karnataka girl for braving social outrage to don a hijab to college, especially when the student's father is a local Popular Front of India (PFI) leader. The PFI has been under the scanner of Indian security agencies, including the Intelligence Bureau.

The mechanics of the drone operation in Kabul suggest it was the result of an understanding between the Pakistani security establishment and the

American intelligence organisation, security officials here claimed.

The Indian intelligence feels that the top echelon of the Pakistani ISI, with a nod from the political establishment, may have "created the conditions" or "devised an operation to identify" the house in the Sherpur area of Kabul where Zawahiri was hiding, before the CIA drone zeroed in on the target. The ISI's most clandestine unit, the Directorate S, is the "most likely" centre from where intelligence may have been shared with the CIA.

To this extent, they saw similarities in the "sudden but operationally sound" helicopter gunship raid on the Abbottabad hideout of Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011, which, sources said, could not have been accomplished without the tacit support of the Pakistani army.

At that time, the Americans had troops on the ground. However, the August 2021 withdrawal of almost all US troops from Afghan soil has led Indian security officials to "assess and analyse" that Pakistan may have "provided intelligence (on the Sherpur house)" to their CIA friends as quid pro quo.



Rescue operations in progress at the landslide site in Muthalli in Bhatkal town

Landslide in Bhatkal claims four of a family

SUBHASH CHANDRAN S @ Bhatkal

FOUR people from a single family were buried alive in a landslide in Bhatkal town on Tuesday morning. The landslide happened following heavy rain which lashed the district after a gap of two weeks causing damage to hundreds of houses.

The deceased have been identified as Lakshminarayana Naik (60), Lakshmi Naik (45), their son Narayan Naik (38) and Praveen Ramakrishna Naik, nephew of Lakshminarayana Naik. The hillock that caved in slowed down relief and rescue operations.

Bhatkal MLA Sunil Naik had to walk for miles to reach the affected place as the roads were blocked.

Uttara Kannada Deputy Commissioner, Mulla Muhilan said the incident was unfortunate as Bhatkal has not been affected by floods before. "The waterlogging is due to heavy rainfall and those affected by floods have been

shifted to relief centres. At present, over 300 people have taken shelter in relief centres," he said. "There is no loss of life due to floods. The deaths were due to the landslide. NDRF, SDRF and a few naval experts have been deployed at some vulnerable places. The next three days are crucial as a red alert has been issued for Uttara Kannada district," he added.

Narayan Naik, brother of Lakshmi Naik, said, "There was a loud noise. We came out and saw a heap of mud and realised that it was a landslide. Since it was massive, we could not do much. We had to wait for rescue operations." **P5**

Second chance for those who missed CUET UG in July

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

CANDIDATES who missed the Central University Entrance Test undergraduate (CUET UG) exam in the first phase in July due to last-minute change of centres and cancellations, will get another chance in the second phase beginning August 4, officials said on Tuesday.

The National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the entrance examination, on Tuesday released admit cards for students appearing for the examination on August 4, 5 and 6 on Tuesday. Admit cards for the examinations to be held after August 6 will be issued later.

The testing agency also announced that exams for candidates affected by the flood and having other entrance and competitive examinations during this period had been shifted to August 12, 13 and 14 from August 4, 5 and 6, following various representations.

Technical problems in the first phase marred the first-ever CUET. Exams were cancelled in two centres, one in West Bengal's New Jalpaiguri and other Punjab's Pathankot — owing to technical issues.

NTA said 19 students who missed the exams in these two centres can now take them.

Registered candidates can download their admit cards from the official website — cuet.samarth.ac.in — by logging in through their registered credentials.

Golden moment for the four



HER-STORY: (From left) India's Lovely Choubey, Pinki Kaushik Singh, Nayanmoni Sankha and Rupa Rani Tiwary created history by winning in the Women's Fours Lawn Bowls final at the Commonwealth Games on Tuesday | **P17**

TABLE TENNIS

Gold for men's team
India men's team comprising A Sharath Kamal, G Sathiyan, Harneet Desai and Sanil Shetty beat Singapore in the final to win gold

LIFTING

Silver for Thakur
Indian weightlifters continue to win medals as Harinder Kaur (71kg) and Vikas Thakur (96kg) clinched a bronze and a silver respectively to add to India's medal tally | **P17,18**

ED searches National Herald office in money laundering case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday carried out raids at 12 locations, including the National Herald House at Bahadurshah Zafar Marg in New Delhi, in connection with the National Herald money-laundering case. The searches come close on the heels of the ED questioning Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and her Rahul in the matter.

Herald House is the office of National Herald and that of its publisher Associate Journals Ltd (AJL), which is under probe over its acquisition by Young Indian Private Ltd.

The searches added fresh fuel to ongoing acrimony between the Congress and the BJP, with the former accusing the ruling party of vendetta. "This is ab-

solute rock bottom for Indian politics," Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate told reporters.

The BJP refuted the charges, claiming the law was taking its own course.

Sonia and her son Rahul are among the promoters and majority shareholders in Young Indian with 38% stake each. It is alleged that Young Indian paid only a paltry sum of ₹50 lakh to obtain the right to recover ₹90.25 crore that AJL owed to the grand old party.

The Congress has maintained there has been no wrongdoing. Since Young Indian is a not-for-profit company established under Section 25 of the Companies Act, there can be no question of money laundering, it contends.



Cong holds protest rally against raids

The Congress on Tuesday held a protest march over the ED raids. "We strongly condemn this vendetta politics against those who speak up against the Modi Govt," said party leader Jairam Ramesh

EXPRESS READ

Struck by lightning, AirAsia flight returns to B'lu from Hyderabad

Bengaluru: An AirAsia India flight, which took off on Tuesday morning from Bengaluru to Hyderabad, was struck by lightning as it neared the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport and had to return. None of passengers on board were hurt but the aircraft suffered damage. The Airbus A320 which took off at 7:39 AM had 91 passengers on board, said an airport source. This included two wheel-chair bound passengers as well as a few children, he said. **P2**



Senior Congress leader and MP Rahul Gandhi and KPC chief DK Shivakumar arrive at Hubballi airport on Tuesday, ahead of CLP leader Siddaramaiah's 75th birthday celebration | **DHEENATH**

Cabinet panel clears withdrawal of charges against 30 activists

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A Cabinet Sub-Committee headed by Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister J C Madhu Swamy on Tuesday decided to recommend withdrawal of cases against 30 people who are facing trials in various courts of the state.

The cases against the accused, including BJP workers and farmers, pertain to damaging public property during protest rallies and demonstrations. Home Minister Araga Jnanendra is also part of the committee.

The recommendations for withdrawal of the cases will now be sent to the state cabinet which will take a final de-

cision in its next meeting headed by Chief Minister Bommai. However, the cabinet's decision will be subject to the decision of the courts.

Though the review of the cases is a routine process, it assumes significance in the wake of the 2023 elections as it involves activists, which include BJP workers. Dropping cases against farmers is also likely to send out a message that the government is with them, a party leader said.

"It's not appropriate to say that the withdrawal of cases are in favour of right-wing or left-wing activists, as the recommendations also favour farmers against whom cases have been filed," clarified Madhu Swamy.



It's not appropriate to say that the withdrawal of cases are in favour of right-wing or left-wing activists, as the recommendations also favour farmers against whom cases have been filed

J C Madhu Swamy, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister

8-yr-old girl dies, parents fall ill after fumigation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a tragic incident, an eight-year-old girl died and her parents took ill after their house was fumigated for pest control. The incident occurred in Vasanth Nagar in High Grounds Police Station limits on Monday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Ahane V Nair, a Class 4 student. Her parents are undergoing treatment at a private hospital. Ahane's father, Vinod, works with a private firm while her mother, Nisha, is a homemaker. The police, who have registered a case of death caused by negligence, have detained the owner of the building for questioning.

Police said the girl's family, which hails from Kerala, lived in a rented house at Maramma Temple street in Vasanth Nagar for the last 3-4 years. As the houses in the building were infested with cockroaches and bugs, the owner Shivashankar, who lives on the ground floor, had decided to fumigate the house and had asked the tenants to vacate the house.

A relative of the victim, who did not wish to be named, said, "The family had gone to Kerala on Thursday night and the owner got the building fumigated. The family returned on early Monday morning and rested for a while. When they woke up, they were feeling dizzy and had a vomiting sensation." **P2**

'No eggs in schools': Tejaswini sparks row

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

TEJASWINI, wife of former Union minister late Ananth Kumar, has kicked up a storm by suggesting that schoolchildren should not be provided eggs in mid-day meals and the diet should be only vegetarian. Tejaswini, who runs Adama Chetana, a facility that prepares meals for school kids said

eggs fall into the category of non-vegetarian food.

She tweeted, "Why has our Karnataka govt decided to give eggs in mid-day meal? These are not the only source of nutrition. It is also exclusionary to many students who are vegetarians. Our policies are to be designed in such a way that every student has equal opportunity."

Her tweet came under heavy fire from many on social media.

Also, defending children's right to nutritional food, a group of nutritionists, activists, researchers, doctors and citizens of Karnataka have written to Chief Secretary Vandana Sharma on Tuesday demanding a nutritional diet. **CONTINUED ON: P4**



Tejaswini Ananth Kumar